United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General reports "limited progress" in implementation of international community's measures to resolve conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina; that Republic asks Security Council to invoke article under United Nations Charter on "coordinated military action" to restore international peace and security.

+ Anti-Apartheid Committee holds commemorative meeting to mark International Day of Solidarity with Struggling People of South Africa; Day of African Child also commemorated today.

+ Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund, James P. Grant, says Agency's responses to emerging global problems will not divert resources from Africa and other poorer parts of the developing world.

+ Pakistan receives $29.2 million from World Bank affiliate to carry out environmental conservation measures.

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There is only "limited progress" to report with regard to the implementation of international community's efforts "to control and resolve the dreadful conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina", according to a new report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, dated 15 June.

The report was requested by the Security Council last Tuesday under its resolution 757 (1992) which authorized the Secretary-General to dispatch military observers to assess the situation at Sarajevo airport. An advance party of observers, lead by Chief of Staff of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), General Louis Mackenzie, was sent to Sarajevo to seek a cease-fire agreement, assess the situation at the airport, and verify the withdrawal of anti-aircraft and heavy weaponry.

Reporting on the team's achievements, the Secretary-General stated in his report that, although a cease-fire has been holding since 15 June and there has been progress in the discussions on the withdrawal of heavy weapons within

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range of Sarajevo airport, "difficulties persist in relation to safe access from UNPROFOR headquarters to the airport". He pointed to the lack of a willingness on the part of the opposing sides in Bosnia and Herzegovina to honour agreements which they have signed and "to use mechanisms which the international community has put into place at great cost and risk to the lives of international personnel".

The Secretary-General also informed the Council that its demand that the Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA) and elements of the Croatian Army now in Bosnia and Herzegovina "must either be withdrawn", disarmed or be subject to the authority of the Bosnian Government, had not been fulfilled.

He said the United Nations would continue "to do all it can to implement both UNPROFOR's original mandate in Croatia and the new one entrusted to it in Bosnia and Herzegovina". He appealed to all concerned to return to the negotiating table saying "political negotiation ... offers the only real hope of restoring peace" in what were the constituent republics of Yugoslavia.

In related news, the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, has charged in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 15 June, that the JNA had not withdrawn its troops as promised and was keeping some 80,000 soldiers in the Republic, who continued the destruction of Sarajevo. He asked the Security Council "to pass a new resolution" which would be aimed at the immediate withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In yet another letter yesterday, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haris Silajdzic, appealed to the Security Council to invoke article 42 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which calls for coordinated military action by air, sea or land to restore international peace and security. "Regrettably", he said, "there is no other option. If this action is not taken now", he continued, "hundreds of thousands will be condemned to death from attack and starvation".

According to a United Nations spokesman, the team of military observers under the command of General Mackenzie had returned to Sarajevo today to work out modalities for the reopening of the airport and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the area. Once this has been worked out, he said, the Secretary-General would submit a new report to the Security Council. (Documents:S/24100-S/24096-S/24099)

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It was urgent that agreement be reached on the arrangements for a transitional period in South Africa, including the establishment of an interim government, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated this morning in a message read out during the observance of Soweto Day at Headquarters.

The observance this year by the Special Committee against Apartheid marks the sixteenth anniversary of peaceful student uprisings against an inferior

system of education in Soweto and several other South African townships, which resulted in the killing and wounding of hundreds of black schoolchildren by South African police forces.

The Secretary-General, in his message read out by James O.C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, urged all concerned to put an end to the persistent violence which continued to claim the lives of innocent South Africans.

In a separate development, the Day of the African Child, which was proclaimed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1990, was being celebrated today under the theme "Keeping the Promise". The Day, organized jointly by OAU and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), aims to highlight the special conditions and needs of African children.

According to Djibril Diallo, Special Assistant to the Executive Director of UNICEF, ten thousand children in Africa die every day from a combination of natural and man-made causes. Africa has the youngest and fastest growing population in the world, and of the continent's 642 million people, 57 per cent are under the age of 16. This November, the OAU is sponsoring a donor's conference in Dakar, Senegal, to initiate dialogue with the international community in support of efforts to improve the welfare of the African child.

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James P. Grant, Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) told the Agency's Executive Board yesterday that "any society which can not care for its children can not regard its development as sustainable". He indicated however that he was encouraged that the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified at a faster pace that any other human rights instrument - by 117 countries.

In an statement to the Board's opening meeting of its general debate, he stressed that UNICEF's responses to emerging global problems would not involve any significant diversion of resources from Africa and other poorer parts of the developing world.

Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that UNICEF's support for the work of her Agency was particularly important at a time of refugee problems of unprecedented magnitude and complexity. About 80 per cent of the refugees under the care of the UNHCR were women and children, she said.

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The Government of Pakistan will receive $29.2 million in assistance from the International Development Association (IDA) for a programme to strengthen environmental protection institutions and rehabilitate polluted and degraded natural resources. The IDA is the World Bank's affiliate for concessionary lending.

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In the past 40 years, the growing population, urbanization and industrialization, combined with resource mismanagement, have placed increasing pressure on Pakistan's environment and natural resources. The Government of Pakistan has now developed a National Conservation Strategy to promote greater public partnership in development and environmental management.

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